FOREST RESEARCH NOTES

CALIFORNIA FOREST AND RANGE EXPERIMENT STATION
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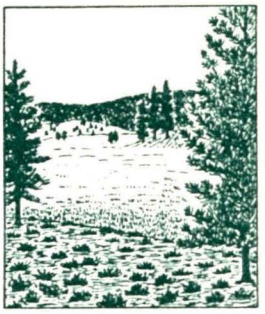

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ONE-FIFTH FEWER SAWMILLS ACTIVE IN CALIFORNIA IN 1957

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The business recession of 1957-58 affected not only the production of lumber, as shown by trade association figures, but also the number of sawmills operating in California. Twenty percent fewer mills were active in 1957 than in 1956--572 mills against 695, according to figures just compiled by the Experiment Station (table 1).

Information on the 1957 status of sawmills was supplied by the California Division of Forestry, national-forest supervisors, and the Humboldt County Assessor's office. A year ago the Station made a rather complete survey of operating mills and lumber production for 1956.

Comparison of the two sets of figures shows that the smaller the size-class of mill in 1956, the lower the proportion of mills operating during 1957. This situation probably continued into the spring of 1958 when the survey was made. The difference between the 1957 and spring 1958 figures is probably attributable partly to the continuing recession and partly to the seasonal character of small mill operations. Of the mills active in 1956, the percents of these operating in 1957 and the spring of 1958 were:

Production size-class:	Operating in 1957	Operating spring 1958
25.0 million bd.-ft. & over	98	92
10.0 - 24.9 million bd.-ft.	94	77
1.0 - 9.9 million bd.-ft.	77	44
Under 1.0 million bd.-ft.	52	22

In 1956 there were about the same numbers of the smallest class of mills active in the Pine and Redwood Regions--95 vs. 105. However, 70 percent of the smallest pine mills continued activity in 1957, while only 46 percent of the same class of Redwood Region mills were active.

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One-third of all mills idle in 1956 were still operable (either operating or idle but able to operate) at the end of 1957. Of these, the Redwood Region had the greater proportion--56 percent--available for operation. However, 5 of the previously idle Pine Region mills actually operated in 1957, while none of this class in the Redwood Region operated in 1957.

In spite of the shut-down of some active mills and the elimination of some operable mills, 63 new mills were operated in 1957, two-thirds of them in the Redwood Region. However, the 63 fell far short of replacing the 203 mills active in 1956 which became idle or non-existent in 1957.

Of the 669 mills existing at the end of 1957, the Pine Region claimed 290 (table 2), and 379 were in the Redwood Region.

Table 1.- Status in 1957 of sawmills operable in 1956
State of California

Activity class and production size class	Total	Operated all or part of year: Operating early 1958	Operated all or part of year: Shut-down may reopen	Idle: Dismantled or burned during year	Idle: Dismantled or burned during year	Still intact 1/	New
	Number of mills						
1956							
Active mills							
25.0 MM bd.-ft. & over	61	56	3	1	1	0	--
10.0-24.9 MM bd.-ft.	130	100	21	1	4	4	--
1.0 - 9.9 MM bd.-ft.	304	134	79	21	44	26	--
Under 1.0 MM bd.-ft.	200	44	55	15	52	34	--
Total active	695	334	158	38	101	64	--
Idle mills	148	5	12	0	98	33	--
All mills, 1956	843	339	170	38	199	97	--
1957							
Changes during year	-174	0	0	-38	-199	0	+63
Total end of year	2/669	339	170	0	0	97	63

MM = million.

1/ Includes 8 mills for which information was lacking.

2/ A total of 572 mills were active--509 of the mills which also operated in 1956, and the 63 new mills.

Table 2.- Status in 1957 of sawmills operable in 1956, by regions, California

PINE REGION

Activity class and production size class	Total	Operated all or part of year: Operating early 1958	Operated all or part of year: Shut down or may re-open	Idle: Dismantled or burned during year	Idle: Dismantled or burned during year	Idle: Still inactive 1/	New
	Number of mills						
1956							
Active mills							
25.0 MM bd.-ft. & over	33	30	1	1	1	0	--
10.0-24.9 MM bd.-ft.	60	49	9	0	2	0	--
1.0 - 9.9 MM bd.-ft.	127	56	31	12	22	6	--
Under 1.0 MM bd.-ft.	95	33	25	8	21	8	--
Total active	315	168	66	21	46	1/ 14	--
Idle mills	78	5	5	0	56	12	--
All mills, 1956	393	173	71	21	102	26	--
1957							
Changes during year	-103	0	0	-21	-102	0	+20
Total end of year	290	173	71	0	0	26	20

REDWOOD REGION

Activity class and production size class	Total	Operated all or part of year: Operating early 1958	Operated all or part of year: Shut down or may re-open	Idle: Dismantled or burned during year	Idle: Dismantled or burned during year	Idle: Still inactive 1/	New
	Number of mills						
1956							
Active mills							
25.0 MM bd.-ft. & over	28	26	2	0	0	0	--
10.0-24.9 MM bd.-ft. 3/	70	51	12	1	2	4	--
1.0 - 9.9 MM bd.-ft.	177	78	48	9	22	20	--
Under 1.0 MM bd.-ft. 4/	105	11	30	7	31	26	--
Total active	380	166	92	17	55	2/ 50	--
Idle mills	70	0	7	0	42	21	--
All mills, 1956	450	166	99	17	97	71	--
1957							
Changes during year	-71	0	0	-17	-97	0	+43
Total end of year	379	166	99	0	0	71	43

1/ Includes 7 mills for which information was lacking.
2/ Includes 1 mill for which information was lacking.
3/ Includes 1 mill whose production was estimated.
4/ Includes 20 mills whose production was estimated, although some were probably in the class next above.